

624 CLAY AVENUE (Commercial)  
Jeannette  
Westmoreland County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-6106

HABS  
PA  
65-JEAN,  
40-

PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
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ADDENDUM TO:  
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### 624 CLAY AVENUE (COMMERCIAL)

HABS No. PA-6106

LOCATION: 624 Clay Avenue, Jeannette, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania

SIGNIFICANCE: A high concentration of window, tableware, bottle and specialty glass plants distinguished Jeannette as "The Glass City" early in its history. Significant housing stock consists of company-built row and detached double houses, and several privately constructed dwellings.

#### PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The deed records for this property clearly show the speculative atmosphere connected with the commercial lots along Clay Avenue in the early years of Jeannette. Andrew Geisinger Jr. of Pittsburgh, one of the first window house workers and later listed as a gatherer living on Gaskill Avenue in Jeannette, bought this lot in September 1888 for \$291. He and his wife Sarah sold it the following July for \$625. By October the lot had sold again for \$800, and in November, it sold again for \$1150. Five years later, in October 1894, Alvin Buckley, a driller, purchased the still vacant property for \$1700. He had the building constructed the following year, and by October, a clothing store was in business on the lower floor. The businesses changed frequently, with subsequent Sanborn maps showing: a grocer; a tea, coffee, butter and eggs merchant; and a wholesale fruit merchant in business by 1910.

Living above the fruit merchant that year was James Hawkins, a self-employed stove repairman, his wife Missouri, a granddaughter Virginia Anderson and the Hawkin's daughter and son-in-law Richard and Ada Barms. Richard worked as a laborer at the window glass works. The Buckleys sold the property to Louis Whiteman of Jeannette in 1911. In the early teens, the Whiteman's had a grocery and meat market here and lived above the store. Louis Whiteman was later one of the founders of the Whiteman Candy Co. formerly on South Fourth Street. In the late 1920s, there was a pool hall in the building run by Albert Walck. The Whiteman's daughter and son-in-law, Frances and Max Applebaum, founded Glass City Drug in 1940. Louis Whiteman's wife, Mollie, deeded the property to her daughter and son-in-law in 1959. The Applebaums sold the business to James and Norma DiPrimio in 1968, and they now own the building.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

This early commercial building dating to 1895 has an even three bay residential façade above with original high arched windows. Exterior materials change from stone veneer on the ground floor to brick veneer above with sandstone sills, keystones and side accents at the windows. The façade was apparently updated sometime after 1916 since the Sanborn maps indicate a metal cornice up until that date. The cornice appears to have been removed, and the upper portion of the façade with five recessed panels was added. The metal and glass storefront is of more recent construction. The pressed tin ceiling is still in place on the interior.

## PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Insurance Maps of Jeannette, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania.* New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1891, 1895, 1900, 1905, 1910, 1916, 1925.

Deed Books. Recorder of Deeds, Westmoreland County Courthouse, Greensburg, Pennsylvania, 165/381, 172/273, 174/354, 181/191, 234/381, 238/61, 500/560, 824/450, 1263/568, 1777/883, 1938/320, 2233/315, 2238/844.

City Directories, 1897, 1913, 1923, 1928, 1948, 1960.

Tax Assessment Books. Westmoreland County Tax Assessment Office, Westmoreland County Courthouse, Greensburg, Pennsylvania.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. 1910 census manuscripts on microfilm.

## PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

In February 1987, the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) and the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) began a multi-year historical and architectural documentation project in southwestern Pennsylvania. Carried out in conjunction with America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), HABS and HAER undertook a comprehensive documentation of Jeannette, documenting industries, housing and cultural institutions.